

Weekly Reflection – Serving for God’s Glory

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 “And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.””” Luke 4:8

Do all for the glory of God. This includes our serving. How do we serve God in a way that worships and glorifies Him? I think this is one of the most important questions a Christian can ask about living the Christian life in a way that glorifies God and does good to other people. It gets at the utterly crucial issue of a right way of serving God that honors Him and blesses people, and a wrong way of serving God that dishonors Him and doesn’t help people. What if you discovered (like the Pharisees did) that you had devoted your whole life to trying to please God and serve God, but all the while had been doing things that in God’s sight were abominations (Luke 16:14-15)? Someone may question this and say, “I don’t think that’s possible; God wouldn’t reject a person who has been trying to please Him.” But do you see what this questioner has done? He has based his conviction about what would please God on his idea of what God is like. That is precisely why we must begin with the character of God revealed in Scripture.

Watering trough or mountain spring?

A mountain spring is self-replenishing. It constantly overflows and supplies others. But a watering trough needs to be filled with a pump or bucket. Is God’s character a mountain spring or a watering trough? Let’s use Acts 17:24-25 to answer that question: ***The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*** God is not served by human hands, He is not in need of anything; so, we conclude that God is not like a watering trough. Yes, serve Him, but not that way; not as though He needed your service. Serve God, but not by presuming to meet His need. He owns everything. He doesn’t need your supply. In fact, He is the One who supplies everything. He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything else. God is not a watering trough; He is a mountain spring.

So, the great question is: How do you serve a spring? How do you glorify God the way He really is? If you want to glorify the worth of a spring, you do it by getting down on your hands and knees and drinking to your heart’s satisfaction, until you have the refreshment and strength to go back down in the valley and tell the people what you’ve found. So, to answer the question, “How do we serve God in a way that worships and glorifies Him?” I would say, we serve God by recognizing that He first must serve us and then we serve others so they can be served by God.

Serve by Grace

Maybe the deepest and clearest answer to how we serve God in a way that honors and glorifies Him is **1 Peter 4:10-11, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”** The first thing to get a hold of is that the way we serve is by using gifts we have been freely given. So, every effort spent in the service of God is a God-given strength. The gifts, the strength, the talent, the skill we use to serve is all grace from God. That’s what must absolutely sink into our souls. Otherwise, we will always think of ourselves

as bringing to God things that He doesn't have, as though we could meet His needs, when He doesn't have any. He's not served as though He needed anything. Serving without relying upon Him to serve us in our serving not only dishonors God but it is not truly helpful for other people. All God-pleasing service is done in the moment-by-moment reliance upon God's service-enabling power. We see this in **1 Corinthians 15:10**, ***"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."*** So yes, we work; yes, we serve. We have a master; we obey. But every step we take in obedience to our Master is a gift of grace from Him to us.

Be Great by Serving Others

We serve God by recognizing that He first must serve us and then we serve others so they can be served by God. In Mark 10:32-45 a couple disciples are arguing over who's the greatest because that's how the world works. Who has the power? Who has the authority over others? ***"But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."*** (Mark 10:43-44) To be great in the eyes of Jesus we must serve others. And I believe the greatest way we can serve others is by first drinking ourselves from the mountain spring and then helping others discover and drink from the spring.

I want to encourage you to consider what this looks like in your life. Picture the people you will interact with this week, in your home, where you work, where you go to school. Now, with all those faces in your mind, stop and see yourself as their servant. You're the servant this week. That changes how you live, doesn't it? That changes the way life looks in your home, when you're the servant of the others who are there. This changes the way you interact at work or in the school, when you're thinking, "I'm here to serve all these people." This changes the way you view church, right? We don't come to church saying, "What can I get out of this?" and stop there. Yes, we want to grow in our relationship with God, but surely the Spirit of Jesus compels us to say, "What can I give here today? How can I serve others?" Just say to God, "How do you want me to serve in the church?" then see where He leads. Do not hesitate to ask that question. God is saying, "I want to make you great by making you servants of others."

Jesus Wants to Serve You

We serve God by recognizing that He first must serve us and then we serve others so they can be served by God. ***"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*** (Mark 10:45) God is saying to you, right now where you are, "I want to serve you." This is the startling truth of Christianity. Jesus, God in the flesh, the creator of all things, the ruler of the entire universe, wants to serve you. It almost sounds blasphemous to say, except for God is the one who says it. He says, "This is why I came. The reason I came was not ultimately to be served by you, but to serve you." The word for "serve" here literally means to wait on you, like a waiter serving you at a table at a restaurant. Jesus says, "I'm coming to you and saying, 'How can I help you? What can I get you? I am your servant.'" Now, obviously this doesn't mean that God is some genie who is ready to grant every wish. That's clear when it comes to the request of the disciples in this passage. It also doesn't mean that you're at the center of the universe. And it certainly doesn't mean you have authority over God, that He must do whatever you tell Him to do. He's God. He has all authority in all the universe. He is at the center of the universe; that's the point. The one who has all authority at the center of all the universe became a man and came to you. Why? To serve you! To help you! This is where our serving God starts, by saying, "We need your help, God. We need you to serve us, in our lives, in our families, in our church." This is the

heart of prayer. To be prayer-less is to be pride-full. If you are not praying desperately for God's help in your life, it is a sure sign that your life is full of pride. If we as the church are not praying desperately before God, as a church, then it is a sure sign we are full of pride before God. The reason so many of us are so busy and have so little time for prayer is because we've convinced ourselves that with more and more of our own effort, we can do it ourselves. Meanwhile, the God of the universe is saying, "You can't. I am here to help you. So, seek Me. Call upon Me for help. I want to serve you." You need God to serve you. The proper place for creatures before the creator is on your knees, saying, "I need you."

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